

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an issue that is important to many people throughout the State of Arkansas and indeed throughout this country. I rise to express my disappointment with the budget as it pertains to law enforcement programs and, in particular, community policing.

I believe the budget shortchanges smaller communities and grossly underfunds programs that have put more police officers on the street, reduced crime in rural areas, curbed drug abuse, and put at-risk youth back on the right track.

Mr. President, this budget cuts funding to the Community Oriented Policing Services—known by its acronym COPS—by 85 percent. That is 85 percent. This program was funded at \$1.1 billion in fiscal year 2002. President Bush proposes only \$164 million for the COPS program in fiscal year 2004. The administration's budget request for COPS represents a 100 percent cut to the COPS universal hiring program, and a 100 percent cut to the "COPS in school" program. In fact, the only program that is funded under this budget is the COPS technology program, and even that has been cut by 66 percent.

From its inception, COPS has awarded just over \$8 billion to local and State law enforcement agencies across the country. With grant money, departments have hired over 110,000 community police officers, in addition to purchasing technological upgrades and equipment.

The COPS Program was established to focus on crime prevention and community engagement. This breaks with traditional notions of law enforcement by moving from reactive responses to proactive problem solving, focusing on the causes of crime and disorder. Community-oriented policing requires much more interaction on the neighborhood and community level than previous policing efforts.

In Arkansas, we have been able to hire over 1,300 additional officers with the \$83 million we have received. We have also used that money to combat methamphetamine use and to implement the COPS Program in schools.

A February 3 article in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, my State's largest newspaper, stated the reason given by this administration for cutting funding is that COPS has "not produced conclusive results in lowering crime."

I speak today not only as a Senator, but also as the former chief law enforcement officer of Arkansas, and I wholeheartedly disagree with this ad-

ministration's assessment of these very important programs.

I have worked closely with law enforcement officers of my State to make Arkansas a safer place and a better place to raise a family. They are strong leaders in their communities and demonstrate the character and the courage that define us as a nation. Together, we are able to keep over 1,000 criminals off the street due to their work on the front lines.

Oftentimes, these police officers work in smaller rural communities. They operate under tighter budgets with smaller staffs than most of their urban counterparts. Nonetheless, they put their lives on the line every single day. They make real differences in people's lives, and they do it with professionalism and an attitude of public service. They do it because it is the right thing to do. They do not do it because it is easy or because it is pleasant, and, Lord knows, they do not do it for the money. They are not asking for much in return.

I wish to take this time to thank all law enforcement officials for the work they do. I especially thank Sheriff Marty Montgomery of Faulkner County, Sheriff Ron Ball of Hot Spring County, and Sheriff Chuck Lange of the Arkansas Sheriffs' Association. They are in Washington today as part of their national association's meeting. I thank them not only for their commitment to public service and to keeping our communities safer—combined they have 87 years of law enforcement experience—but I also thank them for sharing with me their insights into the COPS Program and helping to demonstrate just how important the program is to them and other local law enforcement.

You see, Mr. President, to them, this funding could mean the difference between life and death. This past Saturday at 7:30 p.m., Faulkner County sheriff's deputy, Brad Brocker, was called to investigate a suspicious person call in a high drug-use area. When Deputy Brocker arrived on the scene, he was met with three bullets to the heart in the upper chest. Luckily, he was wearing his bulletproof vest, but he risked his life to make his community and, yes, even his Nation, safer and better. But there is more to the story.

The Kevlar vest he was wearing was paid for by Federal grant money, and Deputy Brocker was originally hired as a deputy under the COPS Program. Putting this Federal money back into our communities works. In fact, Faulkner County, with its 90,000 citizens and spanning 700 square miles, has used COPS funding to hire 12 officers in the past few years. Twelve may not sound like a lot, but it constitutes half of the Faulkner County sheriff's police force. It has made a difference.

In the last 7 years, the arrest rates for burglary, robbery, and methamphetamine production have all gone up. Any one of my colleagues who lives in a rural State can surely tell you

about their problems with the use and the production of methamphetamine. It has become an epidemic throughout rural America.

Last year alone, the Faulkner County Sheriff's Office seized 44 labs and shut them down for good. Sheriff Montgomery is proud of that accomplishment, as he should be, but he warns that by cutting law enforcement programs, such as COPS, the steps they have taken forward will be lost, and they cannot sustain the manpower and law enforcement presence in their county.

I believe we have a duty to support legislation, programs, and budgets to address the challenges facing law enforcement agencies in rural areas in Arkansas and all across the country, in communities such as Malvern, a small city in southwest Arkansas. Richard Taft is the police chief of the Malvern Police Department. Mr. Taft has 32 years of experience in law enforcement and 10 years as Malvern's police chief. When Chief Taft took over in 1993, the Malvern police force consisted of 14 people responsible for protecting a city of over 10,000 citizens. As Chief Taft put it to me one day: I didn't have enough officers to protect my officers, much less the citizens of Malvern.

In 1993, according to Chief Taft, crime was rampant. Robberies, drive-by shootings, and burglaries occurred on a weekly basis. Since instituting the COPS Program and utilizing its grant funding, crime is down. The Malvern police force today is 22 people strong. With the additional manpower, Malvern has assembled a special crime team with the ability to respond to critical incidents, including chemical spills and missing persons. They did not have that ability before. COPS funding has allowed the Malvern Police Department to free up some of their money for other necessities, such as computers and radios.

Chief Taft says:

Without the COPS Program, I wouldn't have a police force.

Yet this administration says there is no conclusive evidence that the COPS Program works? I disagree with that. More importantly, there are scores of law enforcement officials who would also stand up to dispute that claim.

In 1993, Little Rock, AR, had the highest violent crime rate per capita in the country. By working with the Federal Government, using the COPS Program, and their own additional hires, the Little Rock Police Department bolstered their force and violent crime has dropped by 60 percent.

Chuck Lange, the head of the Arkansas Sheriffs' Association, knows the significant impact the COPS Program has had statewide—and I am sure sheriffs in other States can tell you the same thing—by putting more police officers on the street. He knows that more officers have helped shorten response time. That is especially important in sprawling rural communities. He knows that time is not a luxury afforded to crime victims. I know it as

well. It may be because my grandfather, my great-grandfather, and my great-great-grandfather were all sheriffs of Ouachita County.

Hot Spring Sheriff Ron Ball told me that in his county the COPS Program has enabled him to direct more time and resources to curbing domestic violence.

He knows that if his department doesn't do a better job of protecting the abused, they have nowhere else to turn.

And these law enforcement officers all know and have all told me that if we let these drastic COPS funding cuts stand, rural America will suffer.

The list of law enforcement officials opposed to these cuts is long, but the opposition is not only limited to law enforcement. There are many mayors, community activists, and school administrators who also realize the importance of this program; school administrators like Dr. Benny Gooden.

Dr. Gooden is the superintendent of schools in Fort Smith, AR. He oversees 26 schools with 12,500 students. Dr. Gooden knows how successful the COPS in Schools program has been. He knows that COPS is an asset to this community and to his schools. The presence of friendly, approachable police officers, known as School Resource Officers, on their campuses and in their neighborhoods has had a calming effect on Fort Smith schools.

Since the implementation of the COPS program in Fort Smith schools, Dr. Gooden has witnessed a decline in violent incidents. Over the past few years suspensions have decreased by 65 percent. Expulsions have been reduced by 80 percent. The drop-out rate has been cut in half.

When talking about the positive effect of the COPS in Schools program, Dr. Gooden calls it a powerful relationship; a win-win for both the schools and the community. Because the police officers are in the community and in the schools and are connected to the students and their families, officers can better identify and proactively defuse any potential problems there may be.

Often times problems that are found in schools begin in the neighborhood and in the home. Police officers in Fort Smith recognize this and are in a better position to resolve such problems.

Dr. Gooden has also witnessed, firsthand, the affirmative impact of this program on a child's educational experience. The officers interact with students. Some officers have offices in the schools. They are invited to school activities. These officers do not just show up when there is trouble, they are positive role models for Fort Smith's children and are involved in their lives. They spend time with students and in the community when there is no trouble and that presence, can make all the difference.

These positive results are not limited to Fort Smith nor are they only appreciated by the administrators. As Ar-

kansas Attorney General, I spent a lot of time in schools talking to our young people, and move importantly listening. Over and over the students told me how much they liked having School Resource Officers on campus. It made them feel safer, it provided a needed role model and it oftentimes provided an adult they could talk to. It showed our children that their community cared about them and gave them a much better perspective on law enforcement.

We must also not forget the importance of these police officers as an integral part of our homeland defense and as first responders in the case of terrorist attacks. September 11 changed a lot of things for our country. It woke us to the need of genuine partnerships that involve all segments of our communities, and all levels of government. We all have a role in keeping our community safe, and overall when we talk about homeland security, we need to give serious thought to our law enforcement needs.

Unfortunately, we saw how September 11 strained the resources, and the budgets, of many towns and cities. The administration's law enforcement budget does not help that problem. Our civilian authorities must be able to respond to whatever may confront them in the future, but how can they properly respond, when they are given a budget that cuts deep into their existence? The irony is that I have heard Secretary Ridge speak many times about how important local law enforcement agencies are to homeland security, but at the very moment when our Nation needs them most, we are drastically cutting assistance to them.

The Federal Government must ensure that local governments are given the resources to complete their task and that we share the responsibilities for homeland security wisely and fairly. I know that Democrats and Republicans alike agree with this. I know Secretary Ridge agrees with this. I know that President Bush agrees with this.

President Bush said on February 20 regarding the 2003 omnibus appropriations that he was concerned that the Congress had failed to provide over \$1 billion in funds for State and local law enforcement and emergency personnel. He went on to lament that the shortfall for homeland security first responder programs was more than \$2.2 billion.

For the record, I share President Bush's concern, but shortchanging our local law enforcement efforts by under funding the critical, popular and effective COPS program is not the answer. I take a line from Chief Taft of the Malvern Police Department put it best when he said: "Doing away with the COPS Program, when we are so concerned with homeland security is the wrong thing to do." I could not agree more.

Much is made of the word "hero." Before September 11, to pick up a maga-

zine or to put on the television, hero was synonymous with professional athletes, movie stars, or musicians. But September 11 reminded us that real heroes are right in our own backyard. While everyone was rushing out of the World Trade Center, EMT, firefighters and police officers were rushing in. That is the definition of "hero."

Local law enforcement officers protect our communities, our homes and our families from the threat of violent crime. Simply put, they stand up for justice. I believe we must do more to stand up for them. They need funding to do their jobs properly and deliver the same quality service that our citizens expect and deserve, whether they live in New York City, or Des Arc, AR.

During the upcoming budget debate, I will support increasing funding for the COPS program and other law enforcement programs. I would urge my colleagues to do the same. I also plan to be a proud co-sponsor of Senator JOE BIDEN's legislation to reauthorize the COPS program.

We need to build on what we know works and develop initiatives that respond to the law enforcement needs of our communities. The COPS program works and deserves adequate funding. These communities who benefit from this program deserve it as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMM of South Carolina). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate the Senator from Arkansas on what I believe is his first speech on the floor of the Senate since his election. It is a privilege to serve with him, the Senator from South Carolina, and the Senator from New Hampshire in the new class of Senators in the 108th Congress.

It is appropriate that the Senator would choose for his subject law enforcement because of his distinguished career as the chief law enforcement officer of Arkansas and having had members of the law enforcement community in his family for many years. He comes to the floor with a record of distinguished service from a distinguished family whose father is a close friend of many who have served in the Senate with distinction for many years.

My colleagues and I congratulate him on his first speech. We look forward to many years of service with him.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Tennessee for his kind words and express to him once again, as I have done privately and personally, I look forward to working with him on the issues that are so important to him, whether they be education or whatever they may be. It is an honor to serve with him.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate